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Economic and Social Council

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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 4 (a)
Mandated areas: economic and social development

Draft recommendations submitted by the Rapporteur

Economic and social development

1. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommends that the agencies and bodies of the United Nations, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund re-think the concept of development, with the full participation of indigenous peoples in development processes, taking into account the rights of indigenous peoples and the practices of their traditional knowledge.

2. The Forum expresses concern over development practices that do not take into account the particular characteristics of indigenous communities as groups, with their distinct cultural identities and often their own systems of representation, thus significantly undermining meaningful ways of participation in the assessment, preparation, execution and evaluation of development programmes of their concern.

3. The Forum, taking into account that States recognized the vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, calls on the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and Governments to establish processes of meaningful participation and partnership with indigenous communities in these processes, including within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the poverty reduction strategy papers of the World Bank. The Forum recommends, through the Economic and Social Council, that all States, organs and agencies of the United Nations take into account the Kimberley Declaration adopted by the Summit of Indigenous Peoples on Sustainable Development, held in the territory of the Khoi-San People from 20 to 23 August 2002, as well as the plan of implementation of indigenous peoples on sustainable development, when States begin to implement the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

4. The Forum takes note of the adoption by the Commission on Sustainable Development of a substantive agenda for the next several years, and decides to

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prepare inputs to the Commission according to the calendar adopted by the Commission. In preparation for the first cluster for 2004-2005 on water, sanitation and human settlements, the Forum requests its secretariat to prepare, without financial implications, a brief draft position paper and submit it to the Forum at its third session.

5. Noting that the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2003, will devote its high-level segment to rural development, the Forum recommends that the Council, in formulating its conclusions, take into account the unique cultural identities of indigenous peoples and the necessity for their meaningful participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes dealing with rural development.

6. The Forum notes that indigenous peoples are increasingly confronted with issues and problems related to more urban characteristics, such as access to adequate housing, services and infrastructure in human settlements. It therefore invites Governments and local authorities to adopt policies and take necessary measures to meet the changing needs of indigenous peoples within the global process of urban/rural dynamics and continuum. The Forum also recommends that United Nations agencies, funds and programmes increase their focus on this global trend and take actions in their respective areas of work so as to positively affect indigenous peoples. It requests the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to provide a report on policies and programmes in this area to the Forum, and to participate in a dialogue with the Forum at its third session.

International financial institutions

7. The Forum, taking into account the meetings between the World Bank and indigenous peoples held during its second session on the guidelines and operative policies and procedural norms of the Bank, recommends that the Bank:

(a) Continue to address issues currently outstanding, including Bank implementation of international customary laws and standards, in particular human rights instruments, full recognition of customary land and resource rights of indigenous peoples, recognition of the right of free, prior informed consent of indigenous peoples regarding development projects that affect them, and prohibition of the involuntary resettlement of indigenous peoples;

(b) Compile examples of best practices in development projects with indigenous peoples and include those best practices in future policies;

(c) Discuss the issues of forced relocation and land rights;

(d) Facilitate and support the exchange of knowledge and information between indigenous organizations;

(e) Facilitate and support the exchange of information on the implementation of policies on indigenous peoples by international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

8. The Forum welcomes the new initiative of the Bank entitled "Grants facility for indigenous peoples", and urges the Bank to organize consultations with indigenous peoples' organizations to further the process.

9. The Forum requests the International Labour Organization (ILO) to inform the Forum at its third session of the impact of the ILO's major technical cooperation programmes, in particular the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour, and programmes under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights.

10. The Forum renews the recommendation made at its first session on the need to create a three-year working group on free prior informed consent and participatory research guidelines, under the aegis of the Forum, with funding from the regular budget that includes a focus on how they relate to the protection of indigenous knowledge and natural resources.

11. The Forum requests that a meeting of international financial institutions be convened, with the participation of the forum, to consider issues related to their policies, procedures and relationships concerning indigenous peoples, and that a report of the meeting be prepared for consideration at the third session of the Forum.

12. The Forum recommends that the United Nations system, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund formulate development policies for indigenous peoples [that affirm their] identity and [include] the participation of indigenous citizens so as to highlight and initiate programmes and projects [based on] the perspective of the indigenous way of life.

13. Considering the effects of globalization and the need for indigenous peoples to participate in the global economy to promote their development, the forum recommends that the Economic and Social Council invite the World Trade Organization to participate in its third session.

14. The Forum recommends that a world conference on indigenous people in the information society be organized on the occasion of the World Summit on the Information Society (10-12 December 2003), in close cooperation with interested Governments and NGOs. It is recommended that the assistance of the secretariat of the Summit be provided for the organization of such an event. The Forum recommends that a written report on indigenous people in the information society be addressed by the focal point of the Forum, Mr. Matias, to the preparatory committee for the Summit before 31 August 2003.

15. The Forum recommends inviting the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other regional commissions to present a report of its activities on the situation of indigenous peoples and poverty in Latin America.

16. The Forum recommends to States and the United Nations system the implementation of projects of agriculture, fishing, forestry, and arts and crafts production to diversify productive activities and family income sources and to contribute to reducing, according to their own will, the levels of internal and external migration of indigenous peoples, and to providing capacity-building in those areas, by:

(a) Promoting the knowledge, application and dissemination of appropriate technologies and indigenous peoples' local products with certificates of origin to activate product activities, as well as the use, management and conservation of natural resources;

(b) Strengthening the capacities and potential of local human resources to train agricultural, fishery and forestry promoters that respond efficiently to the necessities of the families beneficiaries;

(c) Strengthening the institutional and entrepreneurial capacity of organizations of indigenous peoples to design operative and effective strategies so as to achieve sustainable development for the indigenous peoples of the world.

17. The Forum recommends to Governments the design and implementation of mechanisms for resolving the problems related to land tenure and access to credits, with quality and efficiency and without affecting indigenous peoples.

18. The Forum recommends that States where indigenous peoples live formulate and implement public policies with gender and ethnic considerations, taking into account the multicultural and multi-ethnic composition of their populations.